

# news



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N O V A S C O T I A T E A C H E R S U N I O N

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## **OP-ED: We need to work together to improve our education system**

I just want to take this opportunity to thank Nova Scotians for the outpouring of support teachers have received this past week. At rallies across the province, inside and outside of schools and on-line, the many kind and thoughtful words expressed have been heartening to the NSTU's 9,300 public school members.

Monday was a difficult day for students and their families, and it was a sad day for teachers. All teachers are committed to providing a safe and healthy learning environment, and the government's decision to lock out students created an unnecessary burden for parents.

It was because of the thousands who spoke up for teachers, that government reversed course, and allowed students to go back to school.

Teachers want better learning conditions, safer schools and more time to spend helping students instead of doing paperwork. We also have a right to a fair collective bargaining process, something we have been denied by the current government.

It's for these reasons that earlier this fall 96% of our members voted in support of job action, and it's why we are currently working-to-rule.

It's going to take everyone working together to make our education system the best it can be. It's going to take a lot of change – big and small – to make Nova Scotia's future strong. We want to talk. We want to listen. But if it takes working-to-rule to accomplish needed investments, we've demonstrated we are willing to take that step.

We also want the ability to negotiate for better classroom conditions at the bargaining table. Our children's future is too important to be wagered on political commitments. Teachers want to see positive measures enshrined so they can't be taken away with the strike of a pen from the government.

Right now our primary objective is to get back to the bargaining table in order to reach a new agreement that is fair to students, teachers and families. We have been frustrated by the government's lack of willingness to bargain in good faith, as I'm sure you are frustrated by the lack of a resolution to this situation.

Ultimately, teachers are taking this stand for a better education system. Hopefully soon, the government will come to the table willing to negotiate and not dictate so an agreement can be reached.

Liette Doucet

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